

Claim 16 was objected to as being in improper dependent form.

Cancellation of that claim renders the objection moot.

Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. As shown above, Claim 31 was amended to change its dependency. The amendment removes the objected-to recitation.

Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Cancellation of those claims renders the rejection moot.

Claims 14, 16-19 and 26-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 5,530,264 (Kataoka et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 5,641,997 (Ohta et al.). Cancellation of Claims 16-19 and 26 renders their rejection moot.

Independent Claim 14 is directed to a photovoltaic element encapsulated with an encapsulant resin. The encapsulant resin comprises an ultraviolet absorbing agent dissolved therein, and the dissolved ultraviolet absorbing agent has a concentration gradient in the direction of thickness of the encapsulant resin. The concentration of the ultraviolet absorbing agent is higher at a location near a light incident surface of the encapsulant resin.

Kataoka teaches a photoelectric conversion device. Ohta relates to a plastic-encapsulated semiconductor device in which a semiconductor chip is positioned between encapsulating sheets, which each have a surface that is highly adhesive, and one that is less so. Applicants submit that the combination of Kataoka and Ohta fails to teach or suggest all of the features of amended Claim 14. Accordingly, Claim 14 is believed allowable over any combination of those two patents.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

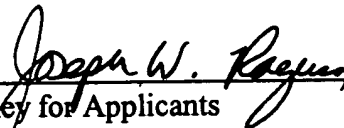
The other claims in this application are each dependent from independent Claim 14, discussed above, and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance and its entry is therefore believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. At the very least, however, it is believed clear that the formal rejections have been overcome, and cancellation of Claims 16-19 and 26 clearly eliminates all issues relating to those claims. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Rejection, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION MARKED TO SHOW CHANGES TO CLAIMS

14. (Twice Amended) A photovoltaic element encapsulated with an encapsulant resin, the encapsulant resin comprising an ultraviolet absorbing agent dissolved therein, wherein the dissolved ultraviolet absorbing agent has a concentration gradient in the direction of thickness of the encapsulant resin,

wherein the concentration of the ultraviolet absorbing agent is higher at a location near a light incident surface of the encapsulant resin.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Amended) The photovoltaic element according to Claim 14 [or 26], further comprising a silane coupling agent dissolved in the encapsulant resin.

31. (Amended) The photovoltaic element according to Claim [30] 29, wherein the concentration of the silane coupling agent is higher at a location near the photovoltaic element.